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Reagan Appoints Rowny Arms Control Negotiator

4 Firings Rescinded; Infighting Continues

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President Reagan yesterday named as his chief arms control negotiator Edward L. Rowny, a retired Army general who helped negotiate SALT II and then denounced the treaty during Senate ratification hearings.

The Rowny appointment came while political infighting continued over other arms control positions and while the National Security Council debated the best timing for negotiations with the Soviet Union on tactical nuclear weapons in Europe.

Those negotiations will be a fore-runner of, and perhaps an indistinguishable part of, negotiations for a third strategic arms limitations treaty, SALT III. SALT II, signed in 1979, has never been formally ratified.

Also yesterday, a group of officials representing government agencies involved in SALT questions moved away from a finding that the Soviet Union has violated the 1972 SALT I agreement. Some officials in the Reagan administration had been arguing strongly in favor of a finding of Soviet violations.

The interagency group's reported move not to accuse the Soviets of SALT violations prepared the way for a meeting in late May of the Soviet-American Standing Consultative Committee to discuss how SALT I has been working.

The new administration has been slow to take decisions in the arms control field. By this time four years ago, the Carter administration had presented new SALT proposals to the Soviets.

Some officials view the Reagan administration's delay to have been both a cause of and a result of political infighting that has intensified recently. Some officials consider it to have been a conflict more over

who has the power to make arms control decisions than over the kind of policies to be followed.

Key officials now being put into place, including Rowny, have shown considerable skepticism about Soviet intentions to conclude and abide by arms control treaties.

The power struggle led Wednesday to the abrupt ouster of five persons who had gone into the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency as members of the Reagan transition team. But yesterday at least four of them were reinstated.

The five were Michael Pillsbury, the agency's acting deputy director, David S. Sullivan, its acting counselor, two consultants, Joseph Lehman and Brett Ciarone, both in Washington, and a consultant in California who specializes in SALT verification law, William R. Harris.

Three of them who were on hand Wednesday were summoned by the agency's new acting director, James Hackett. He told them they were fired immediately on a decision of Secretary of State Alexander M. Haig Jr. in which national security adviser Richard V. Allen had been involved. But a question arose yesterday of whether Hackett had exceeded his authority and whether Haig and Allen had in fact ordered or approved the firings.

Pillsbury and Sullivan both had been endorsed for jobs in the agency by such conservative senators as Jesse Helms, R-N.C.

On an inquiry from Helms' office yesterday about the reported firings, Allen was said by Capitol Hill sources to have assured the senator that Pillsbury and Sullivan and some of the others would remain in the administration. They were informed later in the day that they would continue at full pay as consultants to the agency pending permanent assignments.

The future of all five is expected to become clear after the new agency head, Eugene V. Rostow, arrives to assume control.

The delay in any further action by the agency left unanswered questions put to it on Capitol Hill. Several senators have written formal requests for information on reported Soviet violations of arms control treaties.

There also is a pending request for the agency to explain why it was not consulted by Reagan before he announced his decision to sell new weapons to Saudi Arabia, including airborne radar warning planes. A law requiring the agency's advice on such decisions was the basis for the query.

Rowny was caught in an earlier round of political infighting over administration staffing of arms control positions. In early March White House officials offered him the top job in the arms control agency, but Reagan later gave it to Rostow.

This led to discussions on how to define a job for Rowny that would be both within arms control laws and satisfactory to the general's supporters on Capitol Hill. Rowny was an adviser to congressional opponents of SALT II as well as to Reagan during the presidential election campaign.

The president's announcement yesterday said he intended to nominate Rowny to be his special representative for arms control and disarmament negotiations. He will serve as the chief negotiator and head of the U.S. delegation for arms control negotiations, the announcement said.

Reagan also said he would nominate Rowny for the rank of ambassador.

Rowny, a 64-year-old West Point graduate and holder of a doctorate from American University, was the representative of the Joint Chiefs of Staff for SALT II talks from 1973 to 1979. He retired from the Army with the rank of lieutenant general at the conclusion of the SALT II treaty, denouncing the treaty and the Carter administration for having conceded too much to the Soviet Union.

While a supporter of the principle of negotiated arms controls, Rowny has publicly argued for a more cautious and skeptical approach in dealing with Soviet negotiators.